



The Council Communiqué

Florida Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America

December 2021

Issue 167



President's Message

COL Mike Borders, USA., Ret.

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I am happy to announce that the FCoC will host the Leadership Forum in Orlando from 7-8 January in-person at the Rosen Centre hotel. Last year we had to cancel the event at the Rosen Center and pivot to a virtual program because of COVID. This year's in-person event will be great. We have a super lineup including GEN Walter "Skip" Sharp, Chairman of the Board of MOAA National. We will also have a full slate of key leaders from the MOAA staff. We will have sessions on "Big MOAA," as well as legislative affairs, surviving spouse affairs, chapter operations, social media training, an FCoC Board of Directors meeting, and more. And of course, we will have a big dinner on Friday evening, hosted by MOAA National. Go to www.moaaf.org for details and to register. But hurry, time is quickly running out.

As you enjoy the holidays with friends and family, take a moment to thank Providence for the blessings bestowed on our country and its citizens. We live in the greatest nation in world history. Through their sacrifices, our uniformed men and women helped preserve the

freedoms we all enjoy. They did that by their service. We often hear the phrase "thank you for your service." Some folks get upset at that. I don't. What are they supposed to say? However you may feel about how another person expresses their gratitude, you should know that our nation's military is still the most highly respected institution in America. There is a reason for that—we kept up our end of the bargain. So, we just had a great Thanksgiving, are fast approaching Christmas, and will sail into 2022 in no time. I hope that each and every one of you enjoys the season. Let us have a great 2022, with success and happiness for all, in the greatest nation on earth.

A special thanks to all members of the FCoC Board of Directors, as well as our chapter leaders around the state. This has been a challenging year to say the least. I appreciate all you have done to hold things together.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, and a prosperous New Year!
Cheers,
Mike

Submit Input to:
Randy Fiebrandt, Editor:
rfiebs1953@gmail.com

Vice President's Message

CDR Patrick R (Pat) Kluever, USN, Ret.
Naval Aviator (1320) - Navy Test Pilot School Graduate (Class-71)

Greetings from Pete's Bar Annual Thanksgiving Street Party in Neptune Beach, and I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving!! Mr. Turkey was happy to get our picture taken together, but said he had to run to avoid getting cooked! This 40-year tradition draws visitors from around the state, the U.S. and internationally with crowds sometimes nearing 20,000 for this Thanksgiving morning event. Following the 7:00 am Turkey Trot Race there is drinking and partying in the blocked off streets of the Beaches Town Center. The 2021 holiday season is officially on us!



I echo Mike's wishes to all of you and your families for a safe and joyous holiday season here in Florida.

I spent Tuesday 30 November with Captain Frank Michael, USN (Ret) here at our Fleet Landing Community in northeast Florida beaches area. Frank is the Program Director for MOAA National's Councils and Chapters. We had great discussions about networking with other veteran organizations, the need for community involvement, and some ways that MOAA Councils and Chapters can help our Florida Chapters. Northeast Area Vice President Ron Birchall and spouse Nancy joined us for lunch at Fleet Landing with my Chapter Board members before our annual Chapter meeting. Frank's presence was very beneficial and I encourage all Florida Chapters to reach out for visits from MOAA national to learn more about the support they can provide.

Another important way to learn about that support is to attend our 7-8 January 2022 Leadership Training Seminar in Orlando at the Rosen Center. Frank and I will be working on topics for that session and I encourage Chapter leaders to feed me items that they would like covered during this event. Contact me personally at "vpfcoc@gmail.com" with your top items of interest so we can address them in January in Orlando. Event registration is open at "moaafi.org" and slots are filling up fast so please DO NOT DELAY - SIGN UP TODAY!

Planned Events - 12+ Month Horizon

7-8 January 2022 - Rosen Center, Orlando - Leadership Training Seminar
Late April 2022 - Advocacy In Action - Blended Engagement D.C. and Local
9-12 June 2022 - West Palm Beach Marriott - FCoC Annual Convention
October 2022 - Fall FCoC Board Meeting on Zoom

WHAT YOUR FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS DOES

Florida Council of Chapters and its Chapters are chartered by and affiliates of The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

MOAA and the FCOC are non-partisan, non-profit 501c(19) organizations, and exist to improve the awareness, life style, and overall environment of its affiliate member chapters; support and serve member chapters; influence the political process in matters pertaining to active duty, retired and former military personnel; and enhance the image of America's uniformed services in our local communities.

The Council serves its affiliated Chapters by means of Council officers' in-person and virtual visits, a Council newsletter, a website with Chapter support and training, quarterly Board meetings, annual Leadership Seminar, and annual Convention.



Treasurer's Report

By Marilyn Leehan, Treasurer, Florida Council of Chapters

FCOC TREASURER RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS YOUR ASSISTANCE:

There's an old saying: "If you want something done, ask a busy person." In an organization whose motto is "Never Stop Serving" you all fit the criteria of whom to ask for help. Preparing the invoices for 2022 Chapter dues the first week of January (based upon the number of members listed on the FCOC website for each chapter as of 12/31/2021 @ 75cents/member) bumps into final preparation and number crunching for our January 7-8 Leadership Seminar in Orlando. This also tends to be a time of installation of new officers, as you all well know. If someone in your chapter leadership would please send me the Email address of your Chapter President (or incoming President) and Treasurer, it would be a great help to me in sending the FCOC invoices to the correct Email addresses. Treasurers tend to not have term limits, so I've been emailing dues notices to both President and Treasurers of record.

Another option, that may save time and postage (and help avoid missing mail, which seems to occur a lot these days), is to bring your dues check to the Seminar in Orlando. I will be happy to accept those checks at registration when you check-in to the event. I really appreciate the help, cooperation and kindness shown by all chapters.

Respectfully,
Marilyn Leehan, FCOC Treasurer
mlFCOCtreas@gmail.com (c. 440-812-0100 if questions)

SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR DECEMBER:

December 1st – Civil Air Patrol (USAF Auxiliary) Birthday
December 7th – National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
December 11th – Army/Navy Football Game
December 13th – U.S. National Guard B'day
December 18th – National Wreaths Across America
December 20th – U.S. Space Force B'day (est. 2019)
December 25th – Merry Christmas!
December 28th – Anniversary of the Army

SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR JANUARY:

January 7 & 8 - FCoC Virtual Leadership Forum (sign-up at www.moaafll.org)
January 17th - Martin Luther King Holiday
January 27th – Commemoration Victims of the Holocaust
January 16th Desert Storm (Persian Gulf) Began (1991)
January 27th Vietnam War Cease Fire (1973)
January 31th Panama Campaign Ended (1990)



Chaplain's Message

By CH (COL) Anthony P. "Tony" Clark, ARNG, Ret.

"In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isaiah 40:3

"Proper prior planning prevents poor performance." Every Commander

Many Christian traditions observe Advent, a liturgical season in anticipation of Christmas. The season is intended as a time of joyful preparation for the Christmas celebration and recalling the first coming or birth of Jesus. The preparation extends well beyond decorating a tree, purchasing gifts, or finalizing the holiday meal menu. The preparation is intended to prepare our hearts, minds, and spirits for the celebration.

My Advent preparation includes at least three constant annual activities: reading Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, listening to Handel's *Messiah*, and watching *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Dickens tells a story of Christmas redemption, Handel rehearses the biblical prelude to Christmas, and Charles Schulz reminds me about holiday simplicity.

How do you prepare your heart, mind, and spirit for your Christmas, Hannukah, Kwanzaa, or family holiday celebration and observance? What planned or intentional dimensions are always part of that preparation? What dimensions might you add or subtract this year?

May you and yours enjoy a blessed holiday season and prosperous New Year!

Are you the chaplain for your MOAA chapter? If you are, I hope you will contact me at chclark1995@gmail.com so I can begin gathering contact information for the chapter chaplains throughout the state. There is no obligation to buy and no salesman will call, I simply want to build a communication network among chapter chaplains for mutual support and exchange of information.



Membership Chairman

COL Steve Bond, USA (Ret)

If you are following the recent *Communique* membership articles, we are outlining a campaign to grow our numbers State-wide. In June, the topic was the “Target Rich Environment” in Florida, as the State is #3 in the Nation with resident veterans. In August, we introduced the three Membership Campaign Lines of Effort or “LOE”. Those are: (1) Chapter Programs to Attract and Retain Members, (2) Recruit New Members, and (3) Internal and External Communications and Public Relations efforts to “get the word out”. In the October, we discussed the first LOE--programs your chapter needs to retain current members, as well as attract new members. Some may be wondering--So when we are going to talk about recruiting? That is what LOE #2 is about--the ‘How To’ bringing in new members into your chapter. You can divide those eligible to join your chapter into two groups--those that are already MOAA members and those that are not.

- Someone who is already a MOAA member knows of MOAA's superb legislative advocacy efforts and member benefits. MOAA provides chapters with a monthly listing of those MOAA members moving into your areas that are not chapter members. The “Near Real Time” report is available to your Chapter Committee Module Administrator. The Membership Committee should be contacting those MOAA members that have “opted in” to receive chapter communications and invite them to participate in chapter activities and join your chapter.
- For non-MOAA members, after a brief conversation to determine eligibility, let them know what MOAA does nationally and what your chapter is doing locally. An added benefit for non-MOAA members is when they join your chapter, they can also become basic MOAA members at no cost.



The most effective tool for gaining new members is your current members. They are the “Front Lines” of the campaign--talking to prospective members, finding out their interests, and telling them what MOAA and especially what your chapter has to offer. Create a mindset that all chapter members are recruiters. To help your members be effective recruiters, your Membership Committee should provide material to assist with this task--with items such as information papers or trifold that summarize what MOAA does nationally and your chapter does locally, and applications to join. Encourage members to always carry an application with them as they never know when the opportunity will present itself to recruit a new member. Additionally, make this information available on your website, so new members can join on-line.

Finding new members is as easy as talking to friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Potential new members are easy to identify--they are proudly wearing service logo ball caps and shirts, and their cars have bumper stickers and license plates identifying their service affiliation. Your chapter should participate in area veteran events and celebrations with the purpose of recruiting new members. Set up a recruiting table at those, manned by chapter members to tell others what your chapter is doing. Other ways to get new members is by offering incentives to serving officers or providing “Gold Bar” memberships for newly commissioned ROTC cadets.

In the next Communiqué, we will discuss the third LOE--Publicizing what your chapter does, both internally to your existing members to help make them more effective recruiters and externally in your community to create an awareness of what your chapter is doing.

Let's get organized and grow our numbers! If you have questions contact me at stevebond335@gmail.com.



Legislative Advocacy – Philanthropy – Camaraderie

#2 Recruit New Members

- Every Chapter Member is a Recruiter!**
 - Most Effective Recruiting Method
 - Members talk to People & Tell them what we do!
 - Information Trifold with Application—Elevator Pitch
 - Different Approaches for Active, Retired, Former Officers & for Spouses
 - Always carry an Application!
- Membership & Information Drives:**
 - Presence at Veteran-related Events
 - Invite Members to Stop by & Bring Friends
 - Talk to Area Veterans
 - Raise Community Awareness
- “Special Project” Recruiting**
 - E-mail, Letter & Phone Invitations to area MOAA Members—MOAA Near Real Time Report
 - ROTC Commissioning “Gold Bar” Membership; 1st Year No Cost for Serving Military
 - Information on Website Membership Page

Chapter Tri-Fold



“NEVER STOP SERVING”

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Recruiting Best Practices

- Every member is a recruiter!
- Establish a recruiting budget line
- Create an internal recruiting competition among members
- Build a recruiting package (invitation letter, current newsletter, membership application)
 - Always carry recruiting info with you
 - Have a website or web presence
- Place chapter membership applications on your website
- Use social media to expand your reach (i.e., chapter Facebook page)
- Conduct meetings at different venues and times to meet member needs and encourage active participation
 - Connect with base Retirement Services Office (RSO) or transition center
- Strive for and earn MOAA recruiting and retention incentives and awards
 - Utilize Sales Training techniques (Different approaches for Serving Officers, Retirees, Surviving Spouses, and Former Officers)



Legislative Affairs

Lt Col Bob Bienvenue, USAF, Ret., Legislative Chair



MOAA's Advocacy in Action Campaign – Status Update



Congress Again Fails to Complete Funding Bills by Fiscal Year Deadline

The last time Congress and the White House enacted the necessary legislation on-time to fully fund the government for the upcoming fiscal year was for **FY 1997** !

FY 2022 started like every other year since then, with no budget and the need for a continuing resolution (CR). The first CR of this legislative cycle extended funding for federal agencies and programs through Dec. 3, 2021. I say “the first CR” because as of the date this article was written, the likelihood of a budget and the NDAA to be acted on by congress in time to avoid another CR is very remote.

MOAA Legislative Update:

Read about the latest MOAA Advocacy News and Calls-to-Action here.



<https://takeaction.moaa.org/>

Missing the Oct. 1 deadline in itself has tangible consequences: implementation of new programs is delayed, DoD and other federal agencies cannot modify or discontinue existing programs, and agency leaders begin the new fiscal year with the burden of an unpredictable budget. Having the CR extended past Dec 3rd will just compound that problem, and the impact on new program starts is especially disruptive.

MOAA has long advocated for Congress to address their habitual reliance on continuing resolutions in lieu of passing the annual budget and NDAA on time to no avail - *increased party division, political grandstanding, the decline of military experience in Congress, and other environmental factors have only worsened these two decades-long trends.*

An Extension to Temporary Funding Passed

To deal with the pending government shutdown on December 3rd, HR – 6119 Further Extending Government Funding was passed in the House, December 2nd on a strictly partisan line vote of 221-212. All the Republicans in the Florida delegation voted against this emergency bill to extend the deadline to February 15, 2022.

It was taken up the same evening in the Senate when it passed 69 -28. Senate Rubio was one of the Republican Senators who crossed over to vote AYE. The Bill was signed the next day by President Biden.

A New Strategy Emerges to Expedite Completion of the NDAA

As has been reported previously in the Legislative Reports, on September 23rd the House passed its NDAA for FY 2022 - HR 4350, on a bi-partisan vote of 316-113. [There were 6 members of the Florida delegation who voted against this bill.]

MOAA
Take Action

continued on next page...

The Senate only began floor action on their version of the Defense Bill on November 18th, when Sen. [Jack Reed](#) (D-R.I.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee tried several times to reach a deal to set up votes on a package of 18 amendments on the NDAA. But seven GOP senators stood up to block the deal unless their colleagues agreed to add their additional amendments into the package, thereby delaying further action until after the Thanksgiving break. That delay, combined with time frames required to schedule a conference between the Senate and House to resolve the differences between the two versions of the bill, would likely have pushed NDAA passage into 2022.

The SASC & HASC leadership realized there was no scenario wherein they could pass a separate Senate NDAA before the end of December. With the concurrence of Senate and House leadership of both parties the new approach would be to trade an amended substitute draft of the bill, rather than formally write a third version in the conference committee. The new bill combines elements of a version passed by the full House and a version agreed to in the Senate Armed Services Committee, both in September. S-1605, the new FY 2022 NDAA Act incorporates some of the hundreds of amendments proposed by senators after the SASC reported the bill to the full chamber.

The House passed this Bill on December 7th by a Vote of 363 -70. Cong Posey of Florida's District 8 was the only NAY vote recorded from the Florida House delegation. The Senate is expected to vote the 8th or 9th and then send it to the president early next week. .

What's Left to Do

Even with passage of the NDAA, the back-up funding Bills are still awaiting action. Funding levels will be stalled at the CR level until congress acts on that priority. In addition, lawmakers are still working to raise the debt limit and avoid a default, with an estimated deadline of Dec. 15.

The legislative calendar tentatively calls for both chambers to recess starting Dec. 11. That certainly puts a crimp in their ability to get the job done.

What About MOAA's Top Legislative Priorities in the NDAA?

Before the radical shift in strategy to get the **2100 page NDAA** passed this is what we knew about MOAA's legislative priorities. It will take some time before we know the status of the provisions MOAA has been advocating since the legislative cycle on the NDAA began back in March

- Although **TRICARE Young Adult parity**, did *NOT* make it into the House or Senate NDAA versions, Sen. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.) has filed an amendment that would require TRICARE to cover young adult dependents up
- to age 26 without a separate premium. **[TAKE ACTION: [Urge Your Elected Officials to Fix the TRICARE Young Adult Coverage Gap](#)]**
- Provisions from **the Military Hunger Prevention Act** are included in both versions of the NDAA this year that will authorize a new allowance for families that fall within a band of the local poverty line.
- Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) has introduced an amendment to the Senate NDAA that would **direct DoD to NOT alter any eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington Cemetery** until the submission of a joint report from DoD and the VA to designate the next national cemetery that affords full military honors.

Blocking Proposed Cuts to the TFL Benefit is a Top Priority for MOAA (From MOAA Advocacy News)

October 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of TRICARE For Life (TFL), one of the largest expansions of the military health care benefit and a huge win for MOAA and other military advocates who worked tirelessly to secure a robust health care benefit for Medicare-eligible military retirees.

Since its launch in 2001, TFL has come under budgetary attack in multiple legislative cycles. MOAA has been at the forefront, working with other advocacy groups and *The Military Coalition* to preserve the benefit for Medicare-eligible uniformed services retirees and their families.

Most recent proposals to cut TFL have targeted our newest generation of military retirees — equally unacceptable. It's as true today as in 2001 when TFL was enacted that career servicemembers and their families pay far steeper premiums than any civilian for their benefits in retirement, and they pay them upfront through extended service and sacrifice.

"The TFL benefit was a key component of the compensation and benefits package that sustained the all-volunteer force through two decades of war. Congress must not reduce the benefit just as the generation that served a full career amid high op tempo and repeated combat deployments reaches retirement. Our servicemembers earned comprehensive health care coverage and MOAA will work to ensure it is there when they need it most." Karen Ruedisueli, MOAA's Director of Government Relations for Health Affairs

Pending State Legislation Affecting Servicemembers and their Families who Reside in Florida

This legislation has been introduced during the preliminary work sessions of the Florida Legislature. The bills are to be considered by the assigned committees and voted on in the regular session of 2022: January 11th -March 11th. The FCoC strategy for supporting these bills will be discussed at the Leadership Conference in January 2022.

SB 0358 Professional Counselors Licensure Compact *Ana Maria Rodriguez; R-39*

Creating the Professional Counselors Licensure Compact; providing for recognition of the privilege to practice licensed professional counseling in member states; specifying that licensees practicing in a remote state under the compact must adhere to the laws and rules of the remote state

HB 0559 Occupational Licensure of Military Spouses *Christine Hunschofsky; D-96*

SB 0562 Military Occupational Licensure *Janet Cruz; D-18*

Requires DBPR or applicable board to expedite professional license applications submitted by *spouses of active duty members* of Armed Forces; requires DPBR to issue temporary professional licenses under certain circumstances; requires DOH or applicable board to issue professional license to *spouses of active duty members* of Armed Forces if certain requirements are met

SB 0430 Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children *Tom Wright; R-14*

HB 0153 Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children *Thad Altman; R-52*

Extends the scheduled repeal of the compact and related provisions (affecting Military Children enrolled in Florida schools)

SB 0896 Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans *Danny Burgess; R-20*

HB 0573 Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans *John Snyder; R-82*

Expands eligibility to seek educator certification to specified **military servicemembers** who have completed a specified education requirement; authorizing the Department of Education to issue a temporary certificate to specified military servicemembers who have completed a specified education requirement; specifying the duration of a temporary certificate for specified **military servicemembers**



Personal Affairs

Col Paul Loschiavo, USMCR (Ret)

Everyone has been there. Try to log onto a site that you haven't been to in a while. You end up spending more time resetting the password than you actually spend on the site. And nowadays, your computer will suggest a password which, of course, is very difficult to type, let alone remember.

Then... you use more than one computer to access the internet. Probably an iPhone, an iPad, occasionally a laptop, or maybe a desktop. Switching from one device to another and keeping track of passwords gets *really* difficult.

Using one password for everything is *dangerous* and is often not possible as each website now has its own requirement for a password.

I keep seeing ads and articles about "single password systems" that hold the passwords for multiple sites. I've not tried them as they'd still require that you have a unique password to get that site to work. I can say that I've never heard anyone say that using one is a great idea.

Here's my system for passwords. Techies will most likely scoff at it but, until now, it's kept me out of trouble. The idea is to come up with a password that contains an upper case letter, a lower case letter, a number, and a special character. It also needs to be at least eight characters long. And it must be unique to one website.

The solution: Come up with a five or six letter word that you can easily remember. Something that you'd easily remember but a troll in China would have a hard time guessing. Maybe, your favorite dog is a Yorkie. That becomes your *prefix*, but you change it. Instead of y-o-r-k-i-e, use Y-@-r-K-i-3. That gives you the upper case, lower case, numeral, and special character. Then add the site name to get to at least eight characters. Your password for MOAA National would then be Y@rKi3moaa. Your password for FPL would be Y@rKi3fpl.

All you need to remember is your favorite word prefix.

If you were in the 35th Fighter Squadron, your prefix could be 3\$Fsq. If you were the commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, your prefix could be Co2#6.

Then, go one step further and store the password on your iPhone. But... instead of typing your entire prefix, just type "XxxXxxmoaa" on your contact page for MOAA. All you have to remember is the actual characters for Yorkie.

Here's another benefit. You can give your spouse or very trusted person that prefix.

Should something happen to you, that trusted person would be able to log onto sites for you.

For sites such as banks that require routine changes, simply add a suffix. You can start with 01 then change it to 02 when you need to change it.

If you do your banking with Chase, your password could be Y@rKi3chase01. When you need to change it, change it to Y@rKi3chase02.

Storing passwords in an iPhone is pretty safe as its passcode protected and even the FBI has gone

to court to get Apple to unlock a phone. (Obviously, you need a good passcode to your phone...) I'm unsure of Samsung and Android, but I suspect they're pretty safe, too. Either way, that troll in China will have a tough time breaking in and even if one did, without knowing your prefix, they'd be dead in the water.

On another note, several months ago, I wrote about the need for both spouses to have credit cards in their own name, even if both are joint accounts. Son-of-a-gun... a long time friend died a few weeks ago. His new widow was at the cashier in Publix at 430pm on Friday when her credit card would not work. Talk about embarrassing. And inconvenient. Needless to say, it was three days before she could even start resolving the situation.

Too bad neither she nor her husband were a member of MOAA.



Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Update

Lt Col R. Steven Murray, USAF (Ret.)
Communications & External Affairs Director, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and The Fire Watch Team Up To Launch Innovative Veteran Suicide Prevention Program

Watch Stander program trains community members to learn warning signs of veterans in crisis and how to take action.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Each year more than 6,000 U.S. Veterans take their own lives, including more than 500 here in Florida. Veterans are dying by suicide at a rate nearly 1.5 times higher than that of their civilian counterparts. This tragedy covers all age groups and demographics. It is time to take a new approach toward ending it.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is calling on individual states to accept the challenge of decreasing suicide rates among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families by implementing community-led prevention programs - and Florida has accepted this challenge. The "Florida Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families" will deliver on this promise - to end veteran suicide by preventing veteran suicide. This effort is being led by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) and implemented by The Fire Watch, a Jacksonville-based non-profit founded on the core belief that if we can help veterans find the community resources they need before considering hurting themselves, then we can reduce, or even potentially end, veteran suicide in our communities.

The Fire Watch's cornerstone prevention initiative is called the [Watch Stander Program](#), an early intervention, life-saving network of community members trained to identify risk factors of veterans in crisis and direct those veterans to the resources they need. Effective today, the program is made available to all Floridians. It is free, on-line and available to everyone by clicking here. At the same time, The Fire Watch maintains non-identifiable, county-specific data on veteran suicides from 2010 through 2019 for the entire State of Florida. This data is also now available to the Florida community on The Fire Watch website at [Firewatch Data](#). Visitors can view the veteran suicide count, the veteran suicide rate, and the number of veterans within any Florida county. Results can be sorted by age, gender, and ethnicity.

When used together, the Veteran Suicide Data and the Watch Stander program allow The Fire Watch – and the community - to identify hot spots throughout our state and focus on building a strong community support network in those areas.

“Think about our program like CPR,” says Fire Watch Executive Director Nick Howland. “When CPR training was launched in the 1970s, deaths by heart attack immediately started to decline. Neighbors, colleagues, friends and co-workers all learned the warning signs leading to heart distress and knew to get help quickly. The Watch Stander program is designed to achieve the same result. By having thousands of Floridians aware of the risk factors of veterans in crisis and knowledgeable about how they can help, we will be well on our way to ending the tragedy of veteran suicide here in Florida.”



“We are excited to partner with The Fire Watch to end veteran suicide,” said retired Marine Corps Major General James S. “Hammer” Hartsell, executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs. “The Watch Stander program teaches us to identify veterans in crisis and to call 911 or the Veteran Crisis Line in an emergency. This is crucial to saving lives. But, we also want to help veterans before they descend into crisis. That is why, after the initial training video, Watch Standers are asked to spend a few minutes glancing over some key resources that are available to help veterans. One of those resources is the Florida Veterans Support Line at 855-MyFLVet. Any veteran in Florida - at any time - can call 855-MyFLVet or call 2-1-1 and on those lines a Veteran can talk to experienced attendants – generally veterans themselves – who are standing by 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to connect veterans to the resources they need. Together, we will end veteran suicide.”

Governor Ron DeSantis’ Freedom First Budget Strongly Supports Florida’s Veteran Community

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Ron DeSantis’ Freedom First Budget provides timely and vital support to the state’s 1.5 million Veterans, their families and survivors.

Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs Executive Director James S. “Hammer” Hartsell said: “I’m thankful for Governor Ron DeSantis’ steadfast support of FDVA. As a Navy combat deployed Veteran, he and his administration have committed millions of dollars in funding to Florida’s Veteran

community over the past three years, helping to ensure a positive future for our nation's heroes. Together, we'll ensure Florida continues to be the most Veteran sought-after and Veteran-friendly state in the nation."

One of the biggest responsibilities within FDVA is its network of award-winning State Veterans' Homes. The State of Florida boasts six state veterans' nursing homes and one state veterans' domiciliary. Additional state veterans' nursing homes in Port St. Lucie and Orlando are slated to open to residents in 2022.

Governor DeSantis has proposed funding for the completion and staffing of the additional state veterans' nursing homes in Port St. Lucie and Orlando, and capital improvements and replacement of equipment and furniture for the state's operational veterans' nursing homes and domiciliary.

Other state veterans' home funding includes additional dollars for contract services to cover increased costs and utilization in agency staffing, housekeeping, therapy, medical and pharmacy services. There is also funding to improve the efficiency of veterans' homes staff by upgrading information technology used to track both facility medical equipment and resident medical needs.

The budget provides \$350,000 for continuation of a veteran suicide prevention outreach program. Florida is a role model and leader in the "Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families," a national call to action asking state, military and civilian interagency teams to embark on a process of collaborating, planning and implementing suicide prevention best practices and policies for service members, veterans and their families statewide.

The Governor's Freedom First Budget also continues funding for Florida is for Veterans, Inc. (Veterans Florida). Veterans Florida is a non-profit created by the State of Florida to help military veterans transition to civilian life and to promote Florida's status as the nation's most veteran-friendly state.





Surviving Spouse Corner

Patricia Green, Surviving Spouse Liaison

A year in Review

Last year in October, I was inducted into the NATIONAL MOAA Surviving Spouse Advisory Council (SSAC). Florida is so fortunate, there is another member of the SSAC from the Tampa area, Mrs. Renee Brunelle. This year we begin the second year of our four year term. Because of Covid considerations, there was no formal installation meeting in 2020. Throughout this year, all of our meetings have been through Zoom, Google meeting, or other platforms. Since the Advisory Council members' homes stretch across different time zones and work/travel requirements, just finding a time to meet was a challenge, besides some technical difficulties.

Part of the duties as a member of SSAC are:

- To attend the quarterly SSAC meetings.
- To teach training sessions for other Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaisons. I have participated in three of these sessions covering the South Eastern, Mid-Atlantic, and North Eastern Sectors. They were all done on digital platforms.
- To write two articles a year for the National MOAA Newsletter. I wrote one on finances, one on Mother's Day and a third coming soon.
- To become an active member of the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. (I keep telling you all what a great Chapter that is....great speakers and interesting topics. We meet only by Zoom; no dues and no driving.) My job there is answering emails and queries that come in. Soon I will be coordinating a program on state benefits for Surviving Spouses. Again, we are lucky we live in Florida.
- To attend the National MOAA Annual Meeting. This year it was held in Washington, DC on October 13-16. Renee and I participated in the Surviving Spouse Summit, I moderated a panel discussion as legislative affairs affecting spouses and surviving spouses were discussed, and supervised the Q and A sessions. Renee presented a program on downsizing. Two of the SSAC members, a Gold Star Mother and a CAPT USN Ret, serve on the MOAA Board of Directors. We attended the Board of Director's open sessions and the annual Members' Meeting.

As an SSAC member, this has been a year full of challenges and pleasures. Getting to know the MOAA personnel who represent our National Organization and direct the focus and agenda of the programs, Webinars, Podcasts, and lobbying efforts has been amazing. More amazing though is that they ask me...What are your concerns, what is happening in your Chapter? your state? How

can we help you, your Chapter, your state? Please contribute to the communication process. Are there some things that I can help with at the state level? Do you have some issues that you want me to pass on to the National level?

Having met in person the staff, the representatives from the many states who attended, the Level of Excellence Awardees, my fellow members of SSAC and our “Surviving Spouse of the year awardee”, and members of the Board of Directors, I can report to you that MOAA is truly an organization of workers, members and volunteers who live up to their motto...“never stop serving”.



Fun in the Sun!

Behind the Scenes of the FCOC 2022 Convention

Marty Brown, Publicity Coordinator



Working with your esteemed FCOC [2022 Convention](#) Committee has been an absolute pleasure. We meet via Zoom regularly to report on our progress and plan the next steps. It's exciting to see how things are coming together. So while you're pounding the keyboard ordering those Christmas gifts, take a few minutes to follow some of the links you'll find below.

An important event for 2022 is [Casino Night](#) on Friday evening following the President's Reception. All proceeds from this event will go to the [MOAA Foundation](#) (TMF), which offers grants to councils and chapters to support career development and community outreach programs. These grants benefit currently serving uniformed service members and veterans of all ranks and their dependents and survivors.

The Mission of the MOAA Foundation:

The MOAA Foundation creates, enhances, expands, or supports high-impact, proven-successful programs and services that enable the nation's uniformed service members and veterans of all ranks and their families to maintain a quality of life reflective of their selfless service to America. The foundation funds these programs and services through philanthropic contributions from the American people and organizations that support our mission.

Casino Night offers fun and games of chance with a purpose! The purpose is to support TMF in four critical military and veteran family needs:

- [Career Transition](#)
- [Professional Education and Outreach](#)
- [Military Spouse Professional Development](#)
- [Community Outreach](#)



Individual chapters will also have the opportunity to participate in Casino Night by buying ads in the convention magazine, sponsoring a gaming table, and contributing a gift basket for the silent auction. Chapter presidents will be receiving details on Chapter participation from Tom Wagner, Casino Night coordinator. You can also go to the [2022 Convention](#) on the FCOC website for more information.

Here's a heads up! Everyone's looking forward to The Dinner Detective's production at the Saturday evening banquet. Because the play is woven into all the dinner courses, there will not be dancing due to time constraints. However, this will still be a dress-up affair. Suits for the gentlemen and cocktail attire for the ladies is suggested, and mess dress for all those who have served is welcomed.



Marty Brown, Publicity Coordinator
FCOC Convention 2022
n4gl.marty@gmail.com



Retired Soldiers Casualty Assistance Officers

Submitted by Col Kin LaFate, USArmy, Ret

As the Family of a Retired Soldier, you will always have a connection to the Army. We stand ready to assist during this difficult time through our Retired Soldier Casualty Assistance Officers. You are not alone.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What is a Retired Casualty Assistance Officer (RSCAO)?

A: A RSCAO is a Retired Soldier who has volunteered to provide assistance to the Primary Next of Kin of Retired Soldiers upon their passing.

Q: What sort of assistance does a RSCAO's provide?

A: RSCAOs will assist/provide information on:

- Reporting the death
- Funeral Honors
- DEERS/Identification Cards
- Legal assistance
- Department of Veteran Affairs
- Applying for Survivor Benefits

Q: Who should I call if I am interested?

A: If you would like a Retired Soldier Casualty Assistance Officer, please call the Fort Stewart Casualty Assistance Center at 912-767-7255 or 912- 767-1152 between the hours of 8:00 am—4:00 pm.

The CAC is located at: 55 Pony Soldier Avenue Fort Stewart, GA 31314, and you can also email them at: usarmy.stewart.usag.list.dhr-casualty@mail.mil.

Q: Is the RSCAO knowledgeable?

A: All RSCAOs have been vetted, and gone through hours of training. All RSCAOs have the support of the Fort Stewart Casualty Assistance Center and Retirement Services Office to assist them should it be needed/required. They are prepared to: help surviving spouse report the member's death; assist with applying for the Survivor Benefit Plan annuity; if needed and not done by a mortuary, assisting the spouse coordinating with the VA or Arlington National Cemetery for burial or grave markers; or helping the spouse apply for the arrears of retired pay.

Q: Is there a cost associated with this service?

A: No. There is no cost to receive this assistance.

Q: How long will the RSCAO be with me and my family?

A: The purpose of a RSCAO is to assist with services provided on this flyer. Once all services are completed, their service is complete. At that point if there is any questions or concerns, we ask that you call the Fort Stewart CAC or RSO.

Q: What rank will my RSCAO be?

A: RSCAO's are volunteers. If there is a RSCAO in your area, they will be of equal or higher rank than your Retired Soldier. However, please keep in mind that there are no guarantees on rank. What we can guarantee is that you will receive a RSCAO that will be assigned to you and your Family.

Q: Will the RSCAO come to my house?

A: Depending on the assistance needed, the RSCAO will mainly provide services via telephone.

Q: What if I don't see the county I live in on the brochure?

A: The counties listed below are the only areas where the service is being provided at this time. This is part of a Pilot Program that is available until February 2022. There could be possible expansion some time in 2022. Any changes will be announced in Army Echoes, Retiree Newsletters, Soldier For Life Website.

Northern Florida Volusia, Marion, Flagler, St. Johns, Duval, Nassau, Clay, Putnam, Alachua, Bradford, Baker, Columbia, Gilchrist, Levy, Dixie, Lafayette, Suwannee, Hamilton, Madison, Taylor, Jefferson, Leon, Wakulla, Gadsden, Liberty, Franklin, Mid Florida Citrus, Sumter, Lake, Seminole, Brevard, Orange, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, Osceola, Indian River,, Manatee, Hardee, Sarasota, Desoto, Highlands, Okeechobee, St. Lucie Southern Florida Charlotte, Glades, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Collier, Hendry, Lee



Florida Council of Chapters “Chapter News”

Kingdom of the Sun Chapter

LTC Arlo Janssen, USA (Ret), Editor of the Sunbeams, KOS/MOAA

The Kingdom of the Sun (KOS) Chapter met at the Braised Onion Restaurant in Ocala, FL, on October 7, 2021. The call to Order was conducted by the Chapter President, Lt Col Carol Walker, USAF (Ret). The speaker for the October 2021 luncheon was LTC Dan Hill, USA (Ret), the Mid Central area Vice President for the Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC). He spoke on the many activities facing the FCOC in the coming year, and he answered questions from the KOS members. He highlighted the FCOC Leadership Seminar to be held on January 7- 8, 2022, at the Rosen Hotel

in Orlando, FL. President Carol Walker presented LTC Hill a Certificate of Appreciation at the end of his excellent presentation.

The Annual Business Meeting and Memorial Service was held at the Braised Onion Restaurant in Ocala, FL, on November 4, 2021. The call to Order was conducted by Lt Col Carol Walker USAF (Ret). The program opened with an Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. Lt Col Walker welcomed new members and guests to the luncheon. The recent Five-Star Levels of Excellence Award was pinned to the KOS chapter banner. The slate of Officers and Directors for Year 2022 was published in the luncheon program with some adjustment to the slate at the meeting. The Memorial Service and the election of Officers and Directors for the KOS Chapter followed the Luncheon. MAJ Joe Voge was elected by the KOS members to be President for the year 2022. LTC Carolyn Smith, Chaplain of KOS, was the officiating Officer for the Memorial Service. The KOS Chapter honored four KOS deceased members with the lighting of candles, and Taps was played to conclude the 2021 Annual Business meeting.



Some KOS members at the KOS Annual Business Meeting and Memorial Service at the November 4, 2021, luncheon.

Front Row L-R: COL Gorham Black, COL Bob Schlegel, and COL Aleks Brzezanski

Back Row L-R: LTC Bernard Fisher, Ms Astor Black, LTC Arlo Janssen, Lt Col Carol Walker, COL Nick Navetta, and MAJ Joe Voge.

Checking the program at the KOS Annual Business Meeting and Memorial Service at the November 4, 2021, luncheon.

L-R: Linda Byrd, SSM (Treasurer), LTC Carolyn Smith, Dave Smith, and COL Robert C. "Craig" Ham.



Big Event in South Miami

Col Paul Loschiavo USMCR (Ret)
Area Vice President, Southeast Florida

Southeast Florida has not exactly been a hotbed of activity in MOAA Chapters. At the last in-person board meeting I commented that the Canaveral Chapter *lost* more members in one year than we have in all of Southeast Florida. So when the Area has an event, it's an accomplishment.

Recently, almost all the Chapter presidents from the Keys to northern Palm Beach County, plus a number of the members of the South Dade Chapter, met at an eclectic seafood restaurant in South Miami. Marc Oliveri, current MOAA National Director, was the guest speaker.

Marc brought National's "report cards" for each chapter. The color-coded report highlighted areas where the chapter was effective and where it could use some improvement. The chapter presidents, all former or retired military officers, studied their reports as if they were looking at their annual fitness reports. He then led a give-and-take discussion on some of National's efforts on behalf of those currently serving and veterans.

For what it's worth, National keeps track of visits by National level speakers to chapters. This counted for the Keys, South Dade, Gold Coast, Broward, and Palm Beach - Martin chapters as a "National visit." Marc, who happens to also be the current chapter president of Palm Beach - Martin Chapter, is one of us. He did a great job and I'm glad he suggested this.

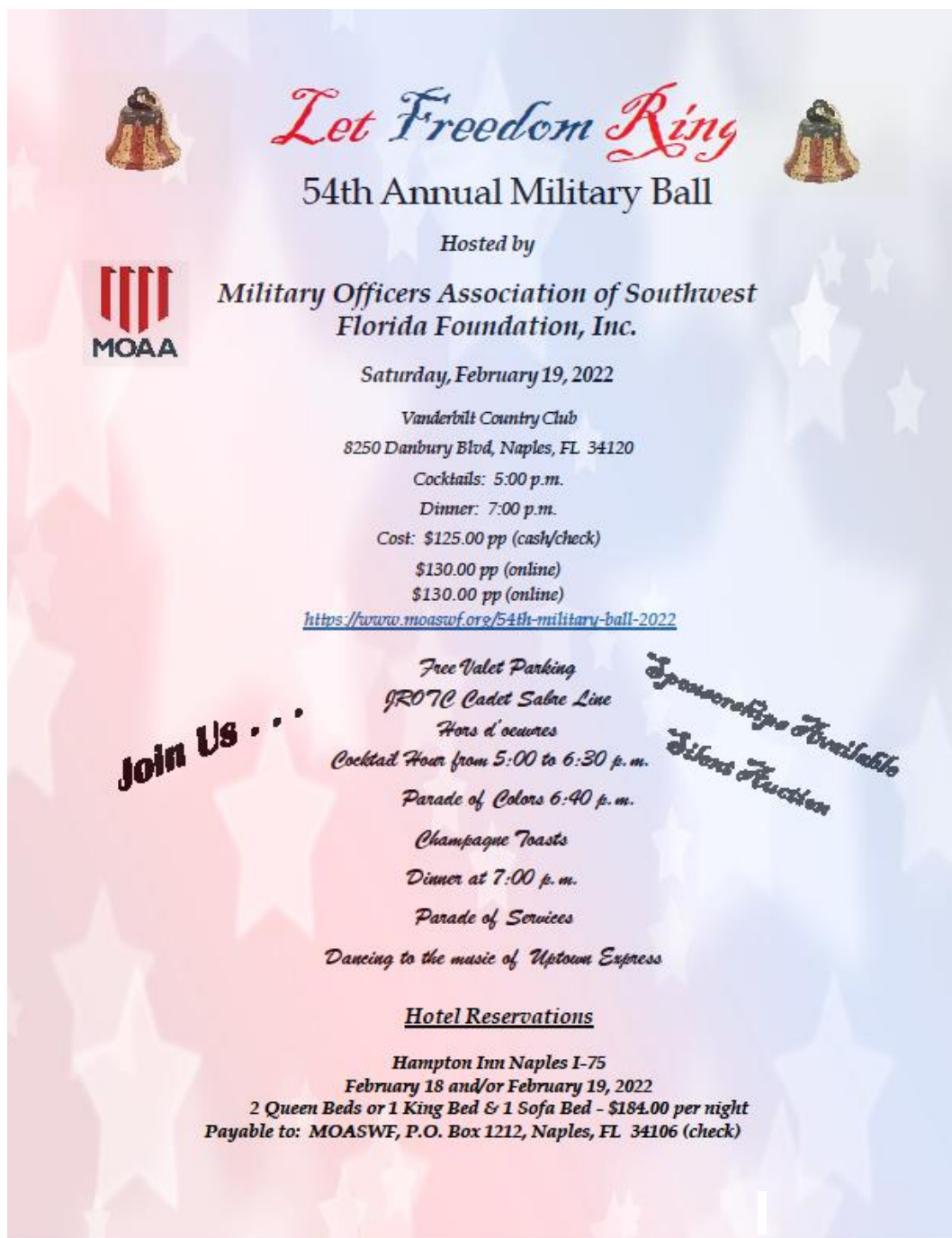


*Dave Harper –Broward; Tom Powell - South Dade (the host of the event); Marc Oliveri - National Director and Palm Beach –Martin; Paul Loschiavo-SEF AVP
Seated: Tom Snook - Gold Coast; Cake Smith - Keys*



Southwest Florida Chapter


Susan Farr, President



Let Freedom Ring

54th Annual Military Ball

Hosted by

 **MOAA**

*Military Officers Association of Southwest
Florida Foundation, Inc.*

Saturday, February 19, 2022

Vanderbilt Country Club
8250 Danbury Blvd, Naples, FL 34120

Cocktails: 5:00 p.m.
Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$125.00 pp (cash/check)
\$130.00 pp (online)
\$130.00 pp (online)

<https://www.moaswf.org/54th-military-ball-2022>

Join Us . . .

Free Valet Parking
JROTC Cadet Sabre Line
Hors d'oeuvres
Cocktail Hour from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.
Parade of Colors 6:40 p.m.
Champagne Toasts
Dinner at 7:00 p.m.
Parade of Services
Dancing to the music of Uptown Express

Sponsorships Available
Silent Auction

Hotel Reservations

Hampton Inn Naples I-75
February 18 and/or February 19, 2022
2 Queen Beds or 1 King Bed & 1 Sofa Bed - \$184.00 per night
Payable to: MOASWF, P.O. Box 1212, Naples, FL 34106 (check)

Cape Canaveral Chapter

Marilyn M. Sanford, MOAACC Media Relations

Veterans Helping Area Veterans in Need

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), a national veteran's service organization comprised of military officers and their spouses, and their charitable arm, the MOAA Foundation, provided grants totaling nearly \$90,000 to 33 of their affiliates across the country to aid veterans-in-need. The Cape Canaveral Chapter of MOAA (MOAACC), one of MOAA's largest chapters, was awarded one of the Outreach Grants for \$3,750 to assist veterans in the area. To identify needy veterans and disperse the local grants, MOAACC teamed up with National Veterans Homeless Support (NVHS). Working with NVHS, MOAACC provided eight individual grants of approximately \$500 to area veterans or their families for emergency relief, housing, and utility payments. MOAACC began working with NVHS and distributing the grants from July until the grant money was exhausted in September.

From the census, there are approximately 4,000 of Brevard County's 70,000 veterans living below the poverty level. NVHS is key in providing emergency aid and does this type of work all year round-----conducting fundraisers, obtaining donations, and working with veteran civic organizations and the VA to validate eligibility and assign case workers-----in order to assist veterans needing assistance. Last year, NVHS provided about \$50,000 of this type of assistance to area veterans.

"We thank the MOAA Foundation for this grant to aid local veterans and NVHS for the work they do for our brother and sister veterans" said Colonel Steve Bond, US Army Retired and the President of MOAACC. Last year, MOAACC's charitable activities donated nearly \$100,000 to area veterans, active duty military families, and military-oriented students.



Colonel Steve Bond, President of MOAACC (center right) and other MOAACC members present a Certificate of Appreciation and Chapter Coin to George Taylor Jr., President and CEO of NVHS (center), for NVHS's work with area veterans-in-need.

MOAACC Past Presidents' Luncheon

Past presidents of the Military Officers Association of America, Cape Canaveral Chapter (MOAACC), posed for a group photo during an appreciation dinner hosted by outgoing president Col. Stephen J. Bond, USA. The dinner was held on October 2 at the Indian River Colony Club.

Pictured L-R:

MAJ Timothy D. Pishdad, USA 2020
 COL Gary Eppler, USAF 2019
 CPT R. Scoot Robinson, USA 2017
 COL John Murphy, USA 2001
 COL Susan Neugebauer, USAF 2011
 COL Jeffrey C. Rogers, USA 2014
 COL Stephen J. Bond, USA 2021
 CW3 Dan Smith, USA 2019
 CAPT Robert D. Watts, USN 2015
 CDR A. Courtney Yelle, USN 2013
 MAJ Joe Oblack, USAF 2010
 CDR William E. Keeney, USN 2006



Space Force Update

At a monthly luncheon held at The Tides Restaurant on October 19, Col. Mark A Shoemaker, USSF was the guest speaker. Col. Shoemaker, who is Vice Commander for Operations, Space Launch Delta (SLD) 45 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, used a slide presentation to update the 85 MOAACC members in attendance on the basic operations of the USSF Center.



Guest Speaker
 Col. Mark A Shoemaker,
 USSF



Col. Steve Bond,
 USA, MOAACC
 President (L) and
 Lt Col Brian
 Whalen, USAF,
 MOAACC 2nd Vice
 President and
 program chairman
 (R) present a
 challenge coin to
 Col. Shoemaker

Lee Coast Chapter

Marilyn Leehan, Treasurer & Webmaster

Lee Coast Chapter Foundation Veteran's Scholarship Programs Make a Difference

Four years ago, our chapter was advised that \$25,000 was the minimum amount to establish a Lee Coast MOAA Scholarship Endowed Fund for Veterans. FGCU President, Dr. Martin, applauded our endeavors by donating \$10,000 to our \$15,000 to immediately establish the fund. The photo represents our second additional \$5,000 contribution to the fund to help veteran students on campus. Many need assistance when their career path requires a master's degree and their GI bill funds have ended.



Chapter President Terry Robertson, Immediate Past President Dr. Brigitte Belanger (accepting on behalf of FGCU) & Tim Moore, Chapter Vice President; present an additional \$5,000 to the Lee Coast Scholarship Fund for Veterans at FGCU.

The most recent recipient, who served in the Marines as a machine gunner for four years, shared his near-death experience with Covid-19 – which caused him to lose half of his right hand, half of his left foot and a portion of his right foot. In his words:

“Being awarded the scholarship has shined some light into my life... and helped with my attitude towards my future. I aspire to become a physician’s assistant... and do not see myself doing anything else other than a medical profession.” In addition to working as an Emergency Dept. Tech for LeeHealth, he is a tutor of at-risk children at New Horizons of SWFL. As a former at-risk child, he is grateful to FGCU who guided him to this opportunity to “be an example for these kids, showing them that they too can have a bright future regardless of the odds that are stacked against them.”

Lee Coast Foundation also just contributed the fourth \$5,000 installment of five to its collaborative scholarship for disabled veterans at FSW. Thanks to two matching contributors, this will be a \$100,000 endowed fund in perpetuity at years end 2022. Three ‘21-22 Fall/Spring scholarships have been awarded in the amount of \$2,000 each to US veterans honorably discharged with VA disability ratings; bringing the total dollars awarded to \$23,625. We know these scholarships make a difference, as one thank-you note read: “Since I’m a first-generation college student, this means that through my success, I pave the higher education path for my children and beyond. Thank you for the impact you’ve made... I cannot wait to do the same for another person.”

Indian River Chapter

Lt Col Carroll Oates, 1st vice president Indian River Chapter MOAA

The Making of a Monument

The IRC-MOAA Chapter FL36 is very proud to have taken the lead on this WW1 Tribute which we dedicated on November 11, 2021 at our Veterans Memorial Sanctuary Island in Vero Beach (at 100 Dahlia Lane). We accomplished our mission in record time and organized and presented the entire 2021 Veterans Day Event here in Indian River County.

A new monument, in memory of World War I veterans, was just completed on Vero Beach's Veterans Memorial Island. The 9-foot-high edifice features a bronze statue of a WWI "Doughboy." One of the many popular beliefs is that the Doughboy nickname was given to American soldiers in WWI because of the doughnuts frequently handed out to them by the Salvation Army.

The monument will be dedicated in a ceremony on 11 November--103 years after the official end of World War I, *the war that was supposed to end all wars*.

The WWI Project, which was officially assigned to the Indian River Chapter of MOAA, is being led by John Matthews, a member of the Marine Corps League, and MOAA members, retired Air Force Colonel Carlos Halcomb and retired Marine Corps Colonel Michael DiScipio.



COL Carl & Doris Halcomb USAF(Ret), COL Michael & Joan Discipio USMC (Ret) and SGT. John & Carla Matthews USMC (Ret)

Until now, the only memorial on the island related to the "Great War," as it was called, is a marker dedicated to Alex MacWilliam, a WWI hero and a former mayor of Vero Beach. It was his idea more than 60 years ago to create a Memorial Island in Vero Beach. The WWI project started last February with a budget of \$4,000 and a proposed site in a remote part of the island.

Over the next few months, the monument location changed twice, until the final one was selected. It turned out to be an important decision because the final site is one of the most prominent locations on the island.

The initial plan was for a four-foot monument with engraved granite panels. That was all the budget could support. For the next several weeks, research, interviews and contacts were made with granite suppliers, engravers, and veteran memorial parks similar to Vero Beach. One of the many

contacts was with the President of the Merritt Island Veterans Memorial Center that led to a set of casting molds for an American WWI Doughboy statue.

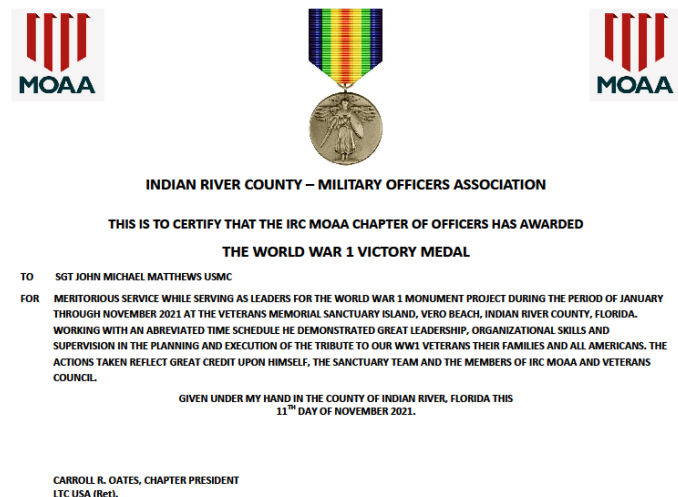
Even more fortuitous, the contact happened to be retired Navy LCDR Dean Schaaf, a Director of the Cape Canaveral Chapter of MOAA, who offered to donate the molds to the Vero Beach project. The discovery of the available Doughboy statue molds at Merritt Island suddenly presented the possibility of a more dramatic concept for the monument—IF additional funds were found to pay for a statue.

Another important event happened at the next meeting, when John Matthews said he knew someone, who might consider donating money for the statue. That was considered a long shot, until a month later, when John produced a check for \$25,000 from Vero Beach philanthropist, Kathie Schumann. With her generous donation, the project team stopped thinking about a four-foot-high block of stone and started visualizing a monument with a statue that could be the centerpiece of the island.

No time was wasted in claiming the molds and taking them to American Bronze in Sanford, FL, who was tasked with casting the doughboy statue. Over the next several weeks, monument design, copy and location renderings were presented and approved by the city and the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Committee.

The next step required the cooperation and skill of the Vero Beach Dept. of Public Works to construct a beautiful walkway and a sturdy pedestal to support the 400 pound bronze statue.

Brevard Stone covered the pedestal with 1-1/4-inch polished black granite on Sept. 30. On Oct. 13, C-Spray Engraving etched the front panel with the words: "In Memory of Those Who Served in World War I" and with "World War I / 1917-1918" on the large side panel. Finally, on Oct. 15, American Bronze mounted the statue on the pedestal.



The impression and visibility of the monument, to visitors entering the island, will be second only to the American flag flying 25 yards away. The monument was funded entirely from private donors, such as the Marine Corps League, MOAA and others.

South Central Florida Chapter

COL Mike Borders, USA., Ret.

South Central Florida Chapter Makes Thanksgiving What it is Supposed To Be

As part of the South Central Florida Chapter's support to needy veterans, and with the financial backing of the MOAA Foundation, fifty-one veteran families received Thanksgiving baskets loaded with a turkey and all the trimmings on 22 November 2021. The chapter is a recipient of the MOAA Foundation grant—this year receiving \$7500 in combined basic and COVID-specific funding. As a member of the Highlands County Veterans Council, this allows the Chapter to provide needy veterans both financial assistance as well as food and personal hygiene items through a pantry operated on the premises of our local County Veteran Services Office (VSO). On the morning of the 22nd, a combined team of the MOAA chapter, the Veterans Council, and the VSO assembled the fifty-one baskets. The baskets included turkeys, stuffing, green beans, gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and much more. This is an annual effort, a public-private partnership of sorts, that helps our neediest of veterans in our area. Our area was hit particularly hard by COVID, both from a health as well as an economic standpoint. The support of the MOAA Foundation grant program is crucial in our chapter's engagement as a leader in the area. Enabled by the grant program, our contributions to the community are recognized at all levels of government and by civic leaders. We do what we do for the right reasons, but there are clearly second and third order effects that accrue to our advantage and benefit. We cannot adequately express our gratitude to the Foundation. Simply put, we couldn't do it without the Foundation, and as a result, our neediest veterans would have their struggles made even more difficult.



Sun City Center Chapter

Ed Mooney, LTC USA (ret), Board Secretary/Publicity Chair

MOAA Installs 2022 Board for Sun City Center Chapter

Florida Council of Chapters President Michael Borders swore in the 2022 Sun City Center Chapter Board of Directors at its monthly luncheon on December 1st.

New president is Eunice Patxot Col USA (ret)
 New 1st Vice President/ Programs Chair Bob Pritcher
 2nd VP/Membership Chair- Walt Cawein LTCOL USAF (ret)
 Treasurer Bob Cochran
 Secretary /Publicity Ed Mooney-LTC USA (ret)

Immediate Past president Jim Haney MAJ USMC (ret)
 Chaplain Benny Blackshire LTC USA (ret)
 Newsletter Chair Cliff Korn CDR USNR (ret)
 Director Ferris Garrett LtCol USAF (ret)
 Surviving Spouse Chair Jean Stratis



VETERANS CORNER RADIO

Bill Hodges, a member of the Sun City Chapter, hosts a Podcast called the Veterans Corner Radio. Veterans Corner Radio focuses on what those who have served in the military, and their families need to know to maximize the services and benefits due to them. No matter if you are currently serving or got out 50 years ago, this program will give you answers to questions you didn't even know you should be asking.

Among those who have been and will be sharing their knowledge are those from the Department of Defense (DOD), Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, National Cemetery Administration, members of Congress (both House and Senate), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), American Legion, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Military Order of World Wars (MOWW), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), just to name a few. You will learn, among many other things, how to use the VA claim process, the services offered by the James A Haley VA Hospital that your local VA hospital may also offer and how to make use of them, and how to access educational benefits and home loans. What you have just read is the tip of the iceberg; there is so much more captured in the shows already posted and those yet to come. Each show is roughly a 15-minute investment in your future and that of your family. Start now to gain the knowledge that will serve you and your family, just as you served your country. We are not a part of any governmental organization.



Veterans Corner Radio

Podcast

Host: Bill Hodges

Recently, he had the opportunity to interview Lt. Gen Dana Atkins Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) President and Chief Executive Officer, who discussed the efforts of MOAA to procure benefits for all service members and veterans. To listen to the program please click on this link:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/952243/9482898>

Should you be interested in hearing some of the other weekly program, with a variety of VA and organizational representatives on some aspects of Veterans Benefits, you can go to the podcast library at <https://www.buzzsprout.com/952243>

Tampa Chapter

Sara Marks, CAPT NC USN (Ret), Editor, The Retrospect

Christmas Eve, 1944: U- Boat 486 and A Military Disaster at Sea

by LTC Bob Sawallesh, US Army, Retired with CWO Tom South, USA , Retired

“On Christmas Eve, 1944, the S.S. Leopoldville made her final crossing of the English Channel. This Belgian passenger liner converted to troopship was carrying 2235 men of the 66th Infantry Division from Southampton to Cherbourg, reinforcements for the Battle of the Bulge. Five and a half miles from shore, the Leopoldville was struck by a torpedo fired by U-486, a Type VIIC U-boat commanded by Oblt. Gerhard Meyer. Several hundred of the troops were killed in the initial blast. Although the ship sank slowly, a combination of errors, delays, oversights and communication problems eventually resulted in the death of several hundred more infantrymen.”

Remembering a Brother, Lost at Sea



Each Veterans Day, Chief Warrant Officer Tom South, US Army Retired, left, honors his late brother by wearing a memorial badge at Unisen Senior Living, formerly University Village. On the right is Tom's late brother, Sergeant Myerl (Bill) South, lost at sea on Christmas Eve, 1944. After the war, survivors of the sinking were told if they talked about the sinking, they would lose their GI benefits.

Key hyperlinks on the sinking of the S.S. Leopoldville are at

<http://leopoldville.org/>,

<http://www.66thinfantrydivision.org/leopoldville.html>,

<http://leopoldville.org/memorial-ft-benning/> and

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/nazi-submarine-found-norway-u-486_n_2963525.





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MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MOAA) FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS (FCOC)

The MOAA Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) is comprised of 42 Chapters with nearly 5,000 members and their families. FCOC is one of MOAA's largest Councils. MOAA has a membership of over 380,000 members in all 50 States.

The FCOC's primary communication vehicles are our bi-monthly publication, *The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ* and our Website www.MOAAFL.org. Ads run for one year.

The *COMMUNIQUÉ* is distributed electronically to all our chapters, MOAA Headquarters in Virginia, and our influential contacts across the state of Florida.

The *COMMUNIQUÉ* provides a unique forum for businesses to reach a select segment of the population. The membership is patriotic and professional. We encourage your business to reach out to our members by advertising in *The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ*.

In appreciation of Businesses that also support the FCOC Annual Convention with Ads in the Convention Souvenir Program Book within the last year the FCOC offers a discount for the same size Ad shown on the following Order Form.

Thank you!

FCOC

Advertise with Us!

Submitting Articles and Pictures for *The Communiqué*

Articles can be attached to an email. Microsoft Word works best (Ariel 12). You can also type your information into the body of an email where it can be copied and pasted into the newsletter. PDF files can also be used but without photos.

Pictures should have a .jpg extension. If you are sending pictures from your chapter, please include the chapter name and the names of those in the picture. A few words on what the event is about will help interest the readers.

If you have questions about your submission, contact

Randy Fiebrandt
rfebs1953@gmail.com



The Council Communiqué[®] ADVERTISING ORDER FORM



Size of Ad	Per Issue	Annual Placement
QuarterPage (4"Hx3.5"W)	\$ 75	\$ 300 (Save \$150)
Half Page (8" H x 3.5" W) or (4" H x 7.5 W)	\$150	\$ 600 (Save \$300)
Full Page (9.625" x 7.5" W)	\$300	\$1,200 (Save \$600)

Size of Ad: _____ / # of Placements: _____ OR Annual: _____

Notes: Annual is from Jan-Dec; six (6) issues published electronically on the 10th of the even month. Mid-year placement for a recurring annual placement can be at pro-rated annual rate for remaining issues. Copy due dates for 2020 are: the first day of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

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